



2024

TrailLink Unlimited 

Guides



**Sugar River  
Trail**  
*New Hampshire*



## Sugar River Trail

New Hampshire

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Visitors to the Sugar River Trail (also known as the Sugar River Recreational Rail Trail) can be forgiven if they lose track of which side of the river they're traveling. The 9.5-mile trail crosses its namesake river seven times—twice on covered bridges—between Newport and the outskirts of Claremont. The trail meets the Bobby Woodman Trail, which completes the run into Claremont.

The route follows a railroad corridor built in the 1870s by the Sugar River Railroad for the Concord and Claremont Railway. The Boston and Maine Railroad acquired this electric railway in 1887 and renamed it the Claremont Branch. In the first decade of the 1900s, the railroad rebuilt many of the river crossings as covered bridges; two remained after the railroad stopped using the railbed between Newport and Claremont in 1977.

The Sugar River Trail is one of only a few state trails that allow ATV use, as well as trail bikes (a type of off-highway recreational vehicle), after the snows melt; mountain bikers, hikers, equestrians, snowmobilers, and cross-country skiers also use the trail year-round (snowshoeing and dogsledding are also permitted). Wildlife is abundant in the secluded woodlands; watch for deer, rabbits, beavers, raccoons, wild turkeys, and even the occasional moose around the next bend.

The trail takes a circuitous route between the historic mill towns of Newport and Claremont as it follows the Sugar River valley. Beginning in Newport, you'll find the town has several historical buildings and a Main Street that looks like a movie set for the 1800s, with brick storefronts, clock towers on public buildings, and church steeples. The trailhead on Belknap Avenue is only a few blocks from downtown.

Passing through forest for 2.5 miles, the trail crosses three trestles in quick succession. In another 3 miles, you'll arrive at the first covered bridge, known as Pier Bridge for its central pier. The second covered bridge, Wright's Bridge, appears 1.2 miles after you pass through Chandler.

The Boston and Maine Railroad built these in 1907 and 1906, respectively, as replacement spans. These are two of eight surviving railroad covered bridges in the United States. Unlike covered bridges on New England roadways, these are much narrower and taller, with 21 feet of vertical clearance. While covered bridges sheltered pedestrians and horse-drawn wagons in historic times, the railroads covered their wooden bridges to protect the trusses from the ravages of weather.

The trail passes through woods and then meets up with SR 11/ SR 103 before reaching a junction with the Bobby Woodman Trail on the outskirts of Claremont. The Bobby Woodman Trail heads 2.3 miles into downtown Claremont. You'll find many opportunities for food and services along the way.



# Sugar River Trail

## New Hampshire

**States:** New Hampshire

**Counties:** Sullivan

Length: 9.5 miles

**Trail end points:** Belknap Ave. near N. Meadow Road (Newport) to Washington St./SR 103 Roberts Hill Road & Bobby Woodman Trail (Claremont)

**Trail surfaces:** Ballast, Gravel, Sand

**Trail category:** Rail-Trail

**Trail activities:** ATV, Fishing, Horseback Riding, Mountain

## Parking & Trail Access

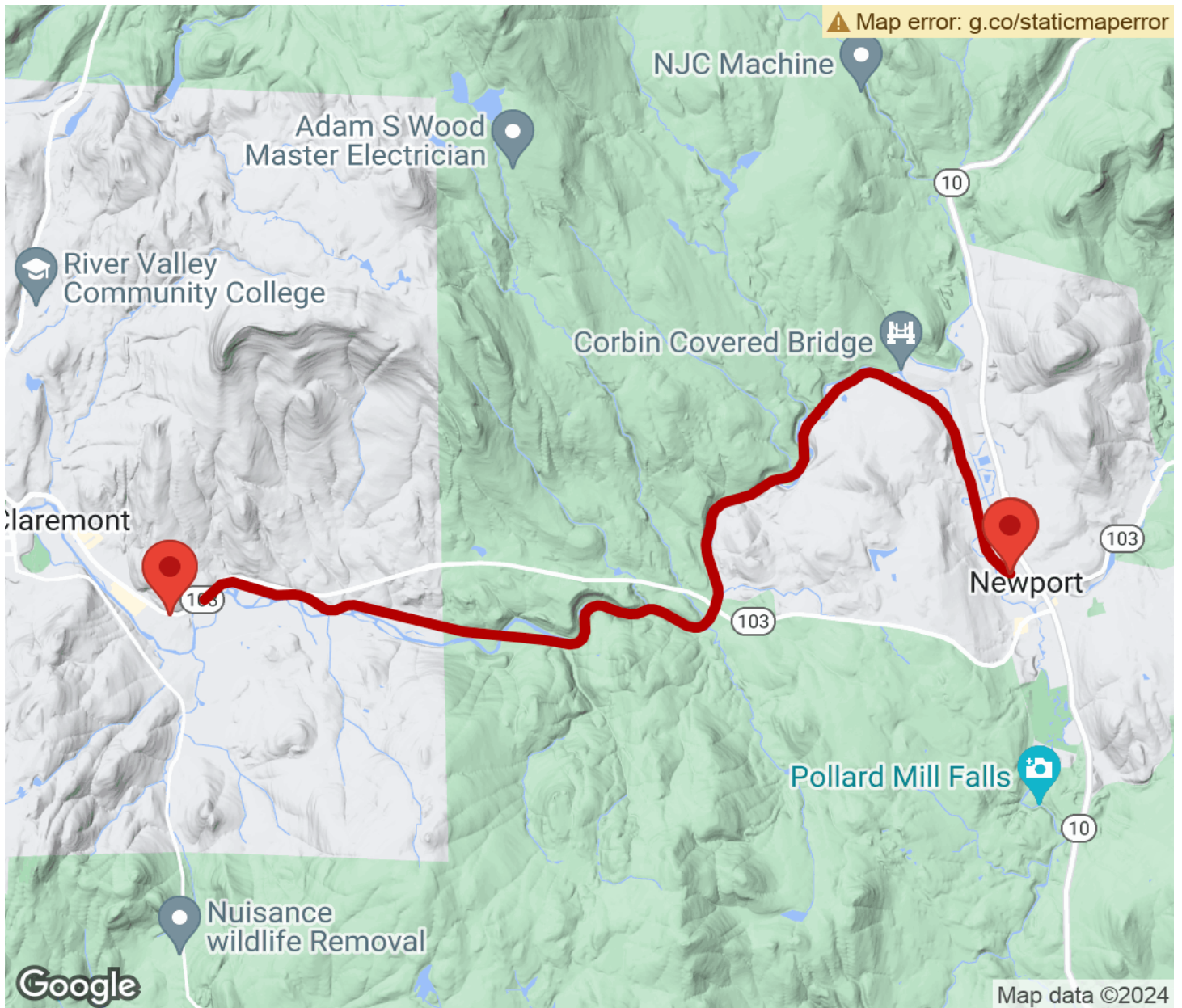
To reach the Newport trailhead from I-89, take Exit 9 onto SR 103 W toward Newport. Turn right (west), go 19.1 miles, and make a slight left to join SR 11 W. Go 3.2 miles into Newport, and take the second right off the traffic circle onto N. Main St./SR 10. Go 0.2 mile, and turn left onto Belknap Ave.; then go 0.2 mile, and look for the trailhead parking on the right at Newport Recreation Department.

To reach the trailhead on the outskirts of Claremont from I-89, take Exit 12 onto SR 11 W toward Sunapee. Head west 7.6 miles, and bear right to join SR 103. Go 3.2 miles into Newport, and take the fourth right off the traffic circle onto N. Main St./SR 11/SR 103. Go 0.2 mile, and turn right onto SR 11/SR 103/Elm St.; then go 0.2 mile, and veer left to stay on SR 11/SR 103. Go 6.9 miles, and look for trailhead parking on the left.



# Sugar River Trail

New Hampshire



Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



**TrailLink**  
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

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